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 C O N F I D E N T I A L

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE TEGUCIGALPA 04936

E.O. 12356: N/A
 TAGS: SCOM, HO, MARR, OREP
 SUBJECT: PROPOSED RESPONSE TO QUERY UH-1 INCIDENT

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 4931

1. THIS MESSAGE FORWARDS PROPOSED RESPONSE TO QUERIES CONCERNING THE UH-1 INCIDENT. Q'S AND A'S CONCERNING INVESTIGATORY PROCESS REFLECT OUR DESIRE THAT THE INCIDENT RECEIVE THE SAME INVESTIGATION TREATMENT BY USSOUTHCOM AS DID THE OH-58 INCIDENT.
2. FOLLOWING ARE PROPOSED Q'S AND A'S:

Q-1 WHERE DID THE FIRE COME FROM?

A-1 THE FIRE WAS RECEIVED AS THE HELICOPTERS APPROACHED THE REFUGEE CAMP NEAR THE BORDER.

Q-2 DID THE HELICOPTER CROSS THE BORDER INTO EL SALVADO

A-2 WHEN FIRED UPON, THE HELICOPTERS WERE APPROACHING THE REFUGEE CAMP AT COLOMONCAGUA WHICH IS SITUATED NEAR THE BORDER. THE INVESTIGATION WILL ATTEMPT TO ANSWER THE QUESTION OF THE PRECISE LOCATION OF THE HELICOPTERS WHEN FIRED UPON.

Q-3 DOES THIS MEAN YOU ARE NOT RULING OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE BORDER WAS CROSSED?

A-3 AS STATED EARLIER, THE INVESTIGATION WILL ATTEMPT TO DETERMINE THE PRECISE LOCATION OF THE HELICOPTERS WHEN FIRED UPON ON THEIR FLIGHT PATH FROM MARCALA TO COLOMONCAGUA HONDURAS.

Q-4 WHO DID THE FIRING? WHAT KIND OF FIRE WAS IT?

A-4 THE WEAPONS FIRE IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN DIRECTED AT THE HELICOPTERS BY SALVADORAN COMMUNIST GUERRILLAS KNOWN TO OPERATE IN THE ILL-DEFINED BORDER AREA. WE KNOW THAT THE SALVADORAN GUERRILLAS HAVE ALSO CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ATTACK ON RADIO VENCEREMOS. THE

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FIRE WAS REPORTED TO BE AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE OF
UNDETERMINED CALIBER AT THIS POINT. A PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION INDICATES THE SENATORS' HELICOPTER WAS STRUCK
BY THREE ROUNDS.

Q-5 WHO IS DOING THE INVESTIGATION?

A-5 THE USSOUTHCOM INSPECTOR GENERAL WILL CONDUCT AN
INVESTIGATION OF THE INCIDENT. IN ACCORDANCE WITH
ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES, A SEPARATE INVESTIGATION WILL
ALSO BE CONDUCTED BY THE U.S. ARMY AIRCRAFT INCIDENT
INVESTIGATION BOARD.

Q-6 CAN WE PHOTOGRAPH THE HELICOPTER? WHERE IS IT?

A-6 THE SENATORS' HELICOPTER WAS LATER FLOWN FROM
MARCALA ON 18 APRIL TO THE JTF-A AREA AT PALMEROLA.
THERE WILL BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PHOTOGRAPH THE
HELICOPTER AT 1:30 P.M. ON 19 APRIL AT PALMEROLA.

Q-7 WHO WILL BE THE INVESTIGATION OFFICER?

A-7 THE INVESTIGATING OFFICER WILL BE CAPTAIN FRED C.
BROCKHAUSEN, U.S. NAVY, INSPECTOR GENERAL, UNITED STATES
SOUTHERN COMMAND, PANAMA.

Q-8 TO WHAT UNIT WERE THE UH-1 HELICOPTERS ASSIGNED
AND WHAT IS THEIR HOME STATION?

A-8 THE HELICOPTERS ARE ASSIGNED TO THE EIGHTEENTH
HELICOPTER COMPANY, FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA. THE
UNIT DEPLOYED TO HONDURAS IN FEBRUARY AS PART OF JOINT
TASK FORCE - ALPHA

Q-9 HOW MANY HELICOPTERS DOES THE UNIT HAVE?

A-9 EIGHT UH-1H TRANSPORT HELICOPTERS. ALSO ASSIGNED
TO JTF-ALPHA ARE 3 UH-1H MEDEVAC HELICOPTERS. IN
ADDITION, FROM TWO TO FOUR U.S. ARMY UH-47 HELICOPTERS
HAVE NORMALLY BEEN ATTACHED TO THE UNIT FROM PANAMA
TO SUPPORT EXERCISE ACTIVITIES.

Q-10 WHO WERE THE PILOTS? CAN WE INTERVIEW THEM?

A-10 THE IDENTITY OF THE CREWMEMBERS IS BEING WITHHELD
PENDING THE COMPLETION OF THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE
INVESTIGATORY PROCESS AND BASED ON THEIR INDIVIDUAL
DESIRES. ANY SUBSEQUENT INTERVIEWS WILL BE AN
INDIVIDUAL DETERMINATION.

Q-11 DOESN'T THE VISIT TO THE REFUGEE CAMP NEAR THE
BORDER VIOLATE RULES FOR U.S. EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS TO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 04936

E.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: SCOM, HQ, MARR, OREP

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REMAIN FIVE MILES FROM A BORDER AREA?

A-11 THE REFUGEE CAMP IS APPROXIMATELY FIVE KILOMETERS
OR THREE MILES FROM THE BORDER. WHILE A SELF-IMPOSED
FIVE MILE RESTRICTION IS A CONTROL MEASURE TO PRECLUDE
INCIDENTS INVOLVING EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS, HONDURAS
IS A COUNTRY AT PEACE. THE JOINT TASK FORCE HAS
ROUTINELY ACCOMMODATED REQUESTS BY OFFICIAL VISITORS WHO
DESIRE TO INCLUDE THE COLOMONCAGUA REFUGEE CAMP AS A
STOP DURING THEIR VISIT ITINERARY. THE VISITS ARE MADE
WITH THE PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE HONDURAN GOVERNMENT AND
COORDINATION WITH THE UNHCR.

Q-12 WAS THERE ANY RELATION TO THIS INCIDENT AND THE
OH-58 HELICOPTER SHOT DOWN BY NICARAGUAN FORCES ON
JANUARY 11?

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A-12 ONLY IN THAT THE HELICOPTERS WERE UNARMED AND ON ROUTINE MISSIONS. WE BELIEVE AT THIS POINT THE SENATORS HELICOPTERS WERE OVER HONDURAN TERRITORY WHEN ATTACKED. YOU WILL RECALL THAT THE OH-58 PILOT WAS KILLED WHILE HE WAS ON HONDURAN SOIL.

Q-13 WHO WERE THE PASSENGERS ON EACH HELICOPTER?

A-13 THE PARTY INCLUDED SENATORS JOHNSTON AND CHILES, SENATE STAFFERS RICHARD COLLINS AND DOUGLAS OLIN, U.S. EMBASSY AND MILITARY ESCORT OFFICERS, THE WIFE OF THE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO HONDURAS, DIANA NEGROPONTE, EMBASSY SECURITY PERSONNEL AND A HONDURAN ARMY LIAISON OFFICER.
Q-14 WHAT WAS THE SENATOR'S ITINERARY BEFORE AND AFTER THE COLOMONCAGUA VISIT?

A-14 THE GROUP EARLIER VISITED PALMEROLA AND THEN STOPPED AT MARCALA TO PICK UP A HONDURAN ARMY LIAISON OFFICER PRIOR TO PROCEEDING TO THE COLOMONCAGUA REFUGEE CAMP, WHICH WAS THEIR LAST SCHEDULED VISIT IN HONDURAS. FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT, THE PARTY MADE A PRECAUTIONARY LANDING AT MARCALA BEFORE CONTINUING TO PALMEROLA AND TONCONTIN TO RESUME THEIR ITINERARY TO PANAMA.

Q-15 HOW LONG WILL THE SOUTHCOM INVESTIGATION TAKE? WILL A REPORT BE RELEASED?

A-15 AN ESTIMATED TWO WEEKS WILL BE REQUIRED FOR THE INVESTIGATION AND A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT OF INVESTIGATION IS EXPECTED TO BE MADE AVAILABLE FOLLOWING THE INVESTIGATION. NEGROPONTE
END OF MESSAGE

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